

Recovery Takes Time

Rain helps, but pastures, wells, springs, and watering areas may not bounce back immediately.

After Drought:

- Address erosion, compaction, or system damage
- Track your costs, feed changes, and impacts
- Track your system repairs and problem areas

Financial Assistance May Be Available

Start with JSWCD for local guidance and referrals:

- **JSWCD:** non-regularity guidance and referrals
- **OWRD / Jackson County District 13 Watermaster:** water rights, drought tools, and water supply questions and strategy
- **Farm Service Agency (FSA):** disaster assistance programs, eligibility, notice of loss, and application steps
- **NRCS / OSU Extension:** grazing, pasture, livestock, irrigation and support

If drought affects your livestock water, feed, or grazing, contact your local FSA office early. Programs may help eligible producers with certain drought-related losses.

Possible pathways:

- **ELAP — Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program:** May help eligible producers with certain drought-related costs, such as hauling water, hauling feed, or moving livestock to forage. Producers must file a notice of loss and application through their local FSA office.
- **LFP — Livestock Forage Disaster Program:** Provides financial support to eligible livestock producers who experience grazing losses due to qualifying drought conditions or fire on federally managed rangeland
- **FSA programs:** may apply depending on the loss, location, and program year.

Keep Records

Document dates, receipts, gallons hauled, feed/livestock transportation costs, pasture conditions, photos, and communication with agencies. Eligibility, deadlines, and required records depend on the loss, location, and program year.



Scan Me to check out the WaterWise Guides to find tips and resources that fit your home, land, livestock, or business needs.

jswcd.org/waterwise-drought-guides



Stay Informed.

Get seasonally relevant, local updates about upcoming events, funding opportunities, programs, and resources.

Drought Preparedness



WATERWise
Where Every Drop Matters

for Livestock

**Protect Your Water.
Support Your Herd. Plan Ahead.**

Start Before Water Is Short

Define your Goals and Priorities

In a drought year, your priorities may shift from maximizing pasture use to maintaining dependable water, protecting animal health, and preserving your operation for the long term.

Decide early whether your priorities are:

- Efficient and reliable drinking water
- Protecting pasture condition
- Maintaining herd quantity and health
- Reducing pressure on limited water supplies

Use those priorities to guide where you focus your time, water, and resources.

Confirm Your Water Sources

Understanding your available water supply before the growing season helps avoid difficult decisions later.

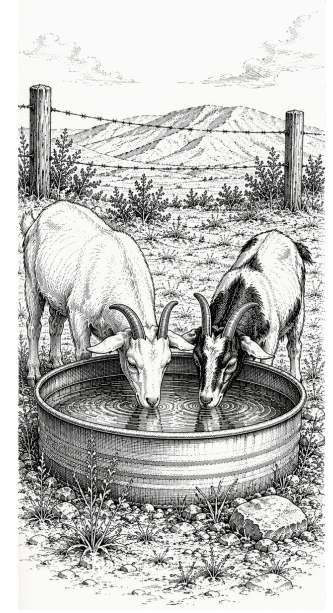
- Wells
- Springs, Ponds, and Surface Water
- Storage tanks

Watch for declining flow or changing water quality before they become urgent.

Prepare Your Water System

Small maintenance issues can waste valuable water during drought.

- Repair leaking pipes, valves, gaskets, and fittings so water reaches your crops instead of being lost.
- Check pumps, filters, and pressure regulators to make sure they are operating properly.
- Flush drip systems and clean filters before the irrigation season begins.
- Inspect sprinklers, drip emitters, or flood irrigation structures for damaged or plugged components.
- Fix areas where water consistently escapes before reaching the field.



During Drought: Make Every Drop Count

Maintain Efficient Water Flow

Make sure animals can access clean, reliable water while avoiding overflow

During hot, dry conditions, livestock water demand can rise while wells, ponds, springs, or surface sources may become less reliable.

If water supply becomes uncertain

Identify what you would do if a pump, well, pond, spring, or surface source cannot keep up.

This may include:

- Moving animals to a pasture with more reliable water.
- Reducing herd pressure in areas with limited water.
- Repairing or replacing failing parts.
- Contacting the watermaster before changing water use.
- Contacting FSA early if drought creates eligible livestock water or feed impacts.



A leaking float valve can waste hundreds of gallons of water over time. A quick inspection now can save water all season.

Protect Watering Areas

Reduce mud, compaction, and runoff around tanks and troughs

Livestock naturally gather around water, shade, and minerals. During drought, those high-use areas can become compacted, dusty, muddy, or prone to runoff when rain returns.

Check troughs during the hottest part of the day when livestock drink the most when refill problems are easiest to spot.



Ways to reduce damage:

- Move mineral tubs and shade away from water when possible.
- Avoid concentrating animals in one wet or fragile area.
- Stabilize heavy-use areas where appropriate.
- Use rock over geotextile fabric or other durable footing where needed.
- Keep runoff from heavy-use areas away from streams, ditches, and drainages.

Protecting watering areas helps reduce soil damage, manure buildup, erosion, and water quality concerns.

Manage Forage Pressure

Drought can reduce pasture growth and slow recovery. Waiting too long to adjust grazing can make pastures harder to recover later.

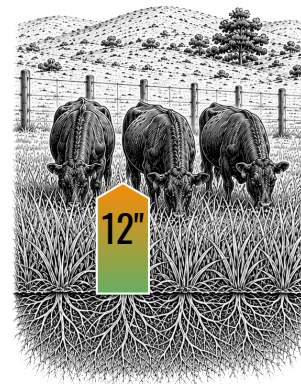
- Rotate livestock before forage is grazed too short. (6")
- Rest stressed pastures.
- Match stocking rates to available forage.
- Watch for bare soil, dust, weeds, and slow regrowth.
- Use supplemental feed or alternative grazing areas when needed.
- Adjust herd size if forage supplies become limited.

Helpful rule of thumb

Where appropriate, the “in at 12 inches, out at 6 inches during drought, and out at 4 inches in normal water years” concept can help prevent overgrazing and support pasture recovery.

Leaving enough plant height helps protect soil, support roots, and give pastures a better chance to recover when moisture returns.

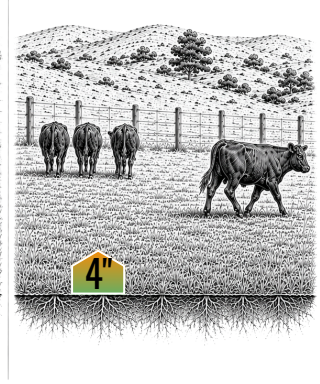
GRAZE IN AT 12 INCHES



DURING DROUGHT,
MOVE OUT AT 6 INCHES



IN NORMAL YEARS,
MOVE OUT AT 4 INCHES



Monitor Livestock During Hot Weather

Water demand increases during drought and hot weather. Watch animals closely for signs they may not be getting enough water.

- Check livestock several times each day during periods of extreme heat.
- Watch for animals crowding around water or empty troughs.
- Look for signs of heat stress, including excessive panting or lethargy.
- Make sure timid or younger animals can easily access clean drinking water.